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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001076

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STATE FOR G/TIP, DRL, NEA/RA AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2016

TAGS: [TAGS](#)

SUBJECT: UAEG RECOMMITS TO SCREENING AND PROTECTING TIP VICTIMS

REF: A. 05 DUBAI 5393

[¶](#)B. 05 ABU DHABI 4737

ABU DHABI 00001076 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: Between March 17-19, Ambassador and CG Dubai engaged senior-level UAEG officials to discuss TIP issues and the importance of making a firm commitment to address the specific problem of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Ambassador highlighted the need to identify victims through systematic screening, greater reporting of trafficking-related statistics, passing a comprehensive trafficking law, and establishing a shelter for trafficking victims. UAEG officials recommitted to addressing these issues and pointed to recent actions in Dubai where formal training and screening procedures have already been put in place, and to the successful abolition of child trafficking as camel jockeys and the repatriation of the victims, as examples of their ongoing efforts. End Summary.

MFA: More TIP Statistics Coming Soon

[¶](#)2. (C) On March 17, Ambassador discussed TIP issues with Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan (AbZ), stressing the importance of the UAE continuing to address trafficking issues with a special focus on sex trafficking. AbZ acknowledged the importance of this focus and requested that the Ambassador brief MFA U/S Rashid Abdullah al-Noaimi further. On March 18, Ambassador and DRL DAS Erica Barks-Ruggles met with U/S al-Noaimi to discuss among other issues, the problem of trafficking in persons in the UAE. The Ambassador told al-Noaimi that the Department was in the process of reviewing TIP tier rankings, and noted that the issue of sex trafficking continued to be a key issue. She pressed the UAE to commit to screening all arrested sex-workers to separate the prostitutes from actual trafficking victims, stating that the police should be working with the victims to obtain information that would lead to arrests and prosecutions of the traffickers. Ambassador reiterated the need for statistics of prosecutions in the UAE and passed al-Noaimi a copy of a February diplomatic note formally requesting this data. Al-Noaimi indicated that these statistics should be possible to compile, adding that the UAEG was already working with law enforcement authorities to sensitize them on the difference between criminals and victims, and then to provide victims with help. (Note: On March 20, MFA Director for International Organizations informed us that a fresh batch of TIP statistics would be made available later this week. End

note.) Al-Noaimi stated that he believed the message was getting across but asked the U.S. to push the issue with the Ministry of Interior and the police. Ambassador replied that she was asking the Consul General to talk with the Dubai police on these same issues.

¶3. (C) Al-Noaimi inquired whether there had been any agreement between the U.S. and the UAEG on any tasks or plan of action regarding trafficking in persons. The Ambassador furnished him with a copy of a draft work plan and mentioned it would be helpful if, during her upcoming trip to Washington, Minister of Economy Sheikha Lubna al-Qasimi could offer any specifics on UAE efforts in this regard.

Police: Screening Procedures In Place

¶4. (C) On March 18, CG spoke with Brigadier Khamees al-Muzeina of Dubai Criminal Investigations Division (CID) about the operations of the new CID anti-trafficking unit (ref A). Al-Muzeina reaffirmed that CID is currently screening prostitutes in order to identify trafficking victims saying "anytime we find a woman who has been forced into prostitution, she is not deported like the others. Instead, we work with her to develop a case against her boss, who is taken to court and charged with running a house of ill-repute." (Note: Al-Muzeina's comments confirm that traffickers are often prosecuted under the charge of running a brothel, which is in-line with the trafficking/prosecution statistics that have been provided to the Embassy. It is also noteworthy that the Dubai Police understanding of who is a trafficking victim--"a woman who has been forced into prostitution" is much narrower than our own. The difference has been repeatedly highlighted to police contacts, with limited effect. End Note.) On March 19, Arabic daily "al-Ittihad" quoted Minister of Interior Sheikh Saif bin Zayed al-Nahyan as saying "the UAE has solved the issue of child jockeys 100%," adding that the UAEG has "developed an

ABU DHABI 00001076 002.2 OF 002

innovative mechanism to solve the (problem) of camel jockeys and we have succeeded."

Labor Minister Ready to Cooperate on TIP

¶5. (C) In a March 18 meeting with DAS Barks-Ruggles and Minister of Labor Dr. Ali bin Abdullah al-Ka'abi, Ambassador again encouraged the UAEG to focus on trafficking problems regarding domestic and sex workers. The Minister inquired how the UAEG could stop sex trafficking. Ambassador urged the UAEG to set up a systematic approach of police investigation and subsequent prosecution of the sex trafficker ringleaders, instead of merely deporting the victims. Ambassador further encouraged the increased prosecution of abusers of domestic workers.

UAE Anti-TIP Committee Has Broad Mandate

¶6. (C) On March 19, Ambassador raised the UAEG's anti-trafficking efforts with National TIP Coordinator Yousef al-Otaiba (director for international affairs in the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court). Ambassador highlighted the need for formal screening procedures such as those currently in place in Dubai (ref B) in order to identify trafficking victims, making it clear that it is important for the government to make a statement committing to this point. Ambassador noted the need for additional prosecution statistics and explained the importance of distinguishing between prosecutions for prostitution-related activities and trafficking. Al-Otaiba indicated that the National Coordinating Committee on TIP that was originally established to address the issue of camel jockeys would broaden its mandate to include all forms of trafficking. Ambassador also pressed for the passing of a comprehensive trafficking law

and the establishment of a trafficking victims shelter.

Comment:

¶7. (C) UAEG officials appear to be committed to addressing the problem of trafficking in persons. Having eliminated the trafficking of child camel jockeys into the country and repatriating the victims at UAE expense, the Government is just now recognizing the need to shift focus to the larger issue of sex trafficking. Dubai, where most of the sex trafficking originates, has already taken the lead in screening for victims of trafficking both at ports-of-entry as well as within the police stations (refs A, B). The slow progress towards eradicating sex trafficking may reflect a lack of understanding of the issue and the definitions of trafficking by G/TIP standards. The UAEG could help its own cause by maintaining and disseminating statistics that reflect their anti-trafficking efforts. End Comment.

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